

To: Appropriations Committee Chairs and Ranking Members

From: Family School Connection Program, Hands On Hartford

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"We are asking for preservation of Family School Connection, a program of the Children's Trust Fund, that is proposed for elimination under the Governor's budget. Family School Connection programs demonstrate significant increase in parental involvement in their children's education, strong evidence of reduced absences, improved grades and improved behavior in children, and promising results for preventing child abuse and neglect. Please do not cut funding for this valuable program that can help reduce the achievement gap."

The following are statements from staff and teachers at Betances School in Hartford:

"Family School connection has had a huge impact on my student's education and their lives and their family's lives. One of the reasons for the achievement gap is that the parents in Hartford feel that they don't have the resources or people to help them with their child's life and education. Many of my student's families rely on this program to help them. The students and families fall in love with their home visitors and truly utilize them. I also love the program because sometimes parents do not feel comfortable at first going to the educator to talk about struggles or complications; they use family school connection as a middle man to work with the school. It is part of their community so they feel comfortable to share and ask for help. I think it will be a great lose to Betances and other Hartford schools if the program is taken away."

-L. Giannitty, 2nd grade teacher at Betances

"I have seen the amount of time and effort that this program offers and puts toward our community families. Don't take away the hands that are helping our students, parents, and school."

-N. Medina, Secretary, Betances

"Family School Connection helped families who are at their wits end with their kids with major behavior and mental issues. They have helped connect families to services bringing help to so many needy children."

-E. Baptista, Kindergarten teacher at Betances

"Family School Connection has been a great program to our families. Our students have benefited from them by having them advocate for them and having the parents learn their rights." -M. Barresi, Behavior Specialist

"They work together with our teachers to make sure our families have the tools so their children succeed in their education." -M. Dones, Executive Secretary at Betances

"They have provided invaluable services to many parents by helping them with parental skills and interpersonal skills." -I Didier, School Principal at Betances

"Family School Connection staff has been available to assist school staff in making a bridge between the home and school. One example is a meeting between a staff person, myself and the parent during a crisis situation. By meeting together we were able to determine the child's needs and to strategize to improve behavior at school through the support of the parent." -A. Galasso, teacher at Betances.

"They donate books to our students."

-A. Kusnner, school teacher at Betances

"It is a fantastic opportunity for parents to feel supported in their educational efforts."

-R. Smith, teacher at Betances.